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## **MEETING MINUTES – General Meeting**

**Date:** November 1, 2011

**Time:** 6:00 p.m.

**Minutes recorded by:** Nancy Sousa

**Minutes approved on:** 12-13-11

**Interpreters:** Jon Henry and Maureen McEntee

Cart: Shelley Deming

RIDE: Jennifer Smith

Attorney: Sara Rapport

### **Call to Order**

- a. Chairperson Travis Zellner called the meeting of the RI School for the Deaf Board of Trustees to order at 6:10 p.m. in the Cafeteria of the RI School for the Deaf.

### **Roll Call of Board of Trustees**

- a. **In Attendance:** Marie Lynch, Amy Donnelly-Roche, Jodi Merryman, Westley Resendes, Angelo Garcia
- b. **Excused:** Harvey Corson

### **Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a) (2) – Litigation – CBA**

- a. **MOVED Marie Lynch AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(1) and (2) at 6:11 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- b. **MOVED Amy D Roche AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would return to Open Session at 7:09 p.m. Approved unanimously.
- c. **MOVED Angelo Garcia AND SECONDED Westley Resendes:** That the Board would seal the minutes of Executive Session. Approved unanimously.

### **Motions from Executive Session: None**

### **Acceptance of Previous Meeting Minutes**

October 4, 2011 – approved as written by consensus

October 18, 2011 – approved with corrections by consensus

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None

**Member-Angelo Garcia:** thanked the Board for allowing him to arrive a few minutes late on Tuesdays – there is a conflict with another school meeting that he must attend every Tuesday until 6:00 p.m.

**Reports:**

- **Chairperson** acknowledged Joe Fischgrund, who is here as a consultant who will guide us in the reform plan; we must make sure all is in order for the 1/1/12 deadline.
- **Interim Administration Report: Mary Pendergast** gave a brief update, noting that NWEA and NECAP testing were finished successfully – looking forward to results; we have hired a guidance counselor on a consult basis who has a lot of experience with deaf and hard of hearing students (she will become fully certified) and will start on 11/21; there is still a secondary English position open; we will not post for the Outreach position until the new Director is hired. Ms. Pendergast noted that the Open House and the Halloween Party was well attended by families and staff – the Student Handbook and Family Engagement information was distributed to all at the Open House. She noted that professional development in October consisted of portfolio review; IEP Planning, TSD, Boardmaker instruction and the RI model for teacher evaluation (with rich discussion).
  - **Member** noted that an idea that he got from RI Principals Residency Network – using Reflection as a tool for staff after P.D.; using reflection vs. evaluation.
  - **Ms. Pendergast** answered that she had used survey monkey, but will give reflection a try. She noted that results on NECAP should be here by February or March and NWEA in two to three weeks; we will be doing teacher evaluation in a gradual method – modified to some degree with foundational things, e.g. comprehensive assessment system and looking for complementary evaluators.

**Chair** asked to move some Agenda items to accommodate Mr. Fischgrund and Marie Lynch

**Old Business**

- RISD Language and Communication Philosophy Statement
  - **Chair** referenced the communication from **Mr. Fischgrund** about Communication Philosophy; we want to have clear guidelines to use in the Director search; RISD Mission Statement establishes this function.
  - **Mr. Fischgrund** noted that he and the staff had done a lot of work when he was here in SY09-10 to arrive at a school-wide communication philosophy in deaf education; a series

- of statements/beliefs were developed on what school should provide; ASL is a necessity for this school with the importance of individualized instruction. He believes that the Transformation process should have research-based instruction program fundamental to RISD's very diverse population; applicants for the Director's position should inquire about the school's communication philosophy– we should be concerned if they don't ask
- **Much discussion** ensued about ASL and the implementation of the communication philosophy; promote listening for hard of hearing students; staff being certified and fluent in ASL; new hires being more likely to have this approach. **Member** noted that the use of ASL should be throughout the school and should become policy; revisit staff proficiency in both languages.
  - **Chair: Moved** and a decision reached in consensus that the Board accepts the Communication Philosophy statement as per Mr. Fischgrund's report.

(**Ms. Lynch** left at 8:00 p.m.)

- Groden Center
  - **Ms. Pendergast** reported that Groden is still very interested in space at the school, but because of the delay, would want to look at the agreement again; they want us to consider 3 to 5 years; Andrea Castenada (RIDE) has had conversation with people from Groden.
  - **Chair** responded that the Board is not ready to commit to that discussion and would prefer to park it until after the Reform Plan and a new Director is in place. It was decided that the Chair would communicate with Groden to indicate that there are so many changes going on right now, that we cannot make the commitment to them.
  - **Members** agreed and asked that Groden be removed from the Agenda until at least February or March, noting that a new Director may have ideas about use of the space.
- Transformation Team
  - **Jennifer Smith** reported that she has a binder from the PLA Districts' meeting that she attended and she will leave with Chair. She noted that we would be guided through the streamlined process – the SIG and Transformation Plan have been combined into one for ease of transmission – due 1/1/12.
  - **The Transformation Team** will consist of Jennifer Smith, Joe Fischgrund, Mary Pendergast, Sharon Salisbury, Corsino Delgado, Westley Resendes, Marie Lynch and Travis Zellner.
  - Community Meetings – will be held November 15 and 16 – Fliers were sent home with the children, posted on our website, sent to community. **Member** requested that the

- notices be sent statewide and offered to email list of special education directors to Ms. Pendergast so that the communications could also be distributed to them, further, translate to Spanish and send to all Spanish parents and community. BOT members are not expected to be at these meetings, but would definitely be welcome.
- **Mr. Fischgrund** suggested that we ask stakeholders how we can expand meaningful family involvement; establish a protocol for interventions, curriculum and instruction assessment; use a group process. Would like to establish work groups to include faculty, staff and parents to equate accountability; set up a timeline, e.g. 1/1/12 through 6/30/12 and beyond to next year – stating “this is what we will do” and measure ourselves, ultimately leading to increased academic performance.
  - **RISD Director search**
    - Search Committee identified as – 2 from Board of Trustees, 2 from faculty/staff, 1 parent, 1 from the operations team, 1 from the deaf community, 1 LEA representative and 1 from RIDE – for a total of 9 people with Joe Fischgrund as the facilitator. Angelo Garcia and Travis Zellner are on the search committee representing the BOT.
    - **Sharon Salisbury** is the facilitator of paper screening
    - Timeline: Members suggested a close date of 12/15; hoping to have 4 or 5 good applicants; will hold interviews in February (via phone and VP), bring them in in March for interviews with team; BOT is responsible for final decision; would like to announce a decision by first week of April.
    - **Mr. Fischgrund** noted that a realistic start date would be July 1, 2012; he is able to stay to help with transition; noted that the applicant pool is not large given the history of RISD and the less than positive remarks from staff that have gone on – our reputation is out there and we will have to convince a candidate that this is a good place to be.
    - **Ms. Smith:** noted that she appreciated the timeline, but wanted to add more about the process; feels that Ms. Salisbury should be a participating member of the search committee; and that the posting should remain open until filled.
    - **Chair:** can we do both by keeping the posting open but start the interview process at a certain date – encourage applicants to apply by a certain date?
    - **Members and Ms. Smith** discussed the possibility of leaving the posting open until filled while also inviting candidates, who pass the paper screening process, in for interviews - to enable us to act on good applicants to hire as soon as possible; noting that people who apply are usually in another position and not able to move as quickly as we would like.

- **Member** noted that it should be made very clear to the pool of applicants that this is a premier school and that the opportunity is for them, not us; we must find the person who fits our needs, and not their needs.
  - **Ms. Smith** offered that maybe we could find someone to assist us who is not in a leadership role right now, but wants the challenge of enormous change; we must do our own PR work to get the absolute best person for the job.
  - **Member** noted that the screening committee must keep the transformation and curriculum for deaf education in mind – do the hard work now.
  - **Ms. Smith** suggested that the BOT promptly send a communication seeking individuals from staff who are willing to be on screening committee.
- RISD Policies
    - **Chair** asked the group if they would like to have more in-depth discussion on the language and communication policy before recommending to the policy committee for review, noting this is a preliminary reading, not a first reading.
    - **Member** opined that he did not think it was appropriate to discuss at this point.
    - **Ms. Pendergast** noted that she will attend a third meeting (with the model) and will report back to the Board.
    - **Chair** noted that the Board would hold this recommendation until they get Mary's feedback.
- Board of Trustees Vacancies (Deaf and Hearing Seats)
    - **Westley Resendes** reported that he had received two applications – one applicant for each seat.
    - **Chair** referenced the questions for applicants that were discussed at the last meeting; suggested we clean up the questions for November 15 interviews; committee would interview the candidates before the 11/15 meeting (4:30 – 6:00 p.m.). **Chair** will contact the two applicants to schedule the interviews – he will ask if they would prefer being interviewed in closed or open session. After the interviews, the Board will formally recommend to RIDE and the Board of Regents the chosen applicants.

## Adjournment

- a. Meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.